



Adaptive governance and institutional strategies for climate-induced community relocations in Alaska

Author(s): Bronen R, Chapin FS 3rd
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Abstract:

This article presents governance and institutional strategies for climate-induced community relocations. In Alaska, repeated extreme weather events coupled with climate change-induced coastal erosion impact the habitability of entire communities. Community residents and government agencies concur that relocation is the only adaptation strategy that can protect lives and infrastructure. Community relocation stretches the financial and institutional capacity of existing governance institutions. Based on a comparative analysis of three Alaskan communities, Kivalina, Newtok, and Shishmaref, which have chosen to relocate, we examine the institutional constraints to relocation in the United States. We identify policy changes and components of a toolkit that can facilitate community-based adaptation when environmental events threaten people's lives and protection in place is not possible. Policy changes include amendment of the Stafford Act to include gradual geophysical processes, such as erosion, in the statutory definition of disaster and the creation of an adaptive governance framework to allow communities a continuum of responses from protection in place to community relocation. Key components of the toolkit are local leadership and integration of social and ecological well-being into adaptation planning.

Source: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3677491>

Resource Description

Exposure :

weather or climate related pathway by which climate change affects health

Extreme Weather Event, Human Conflict/Displacement

Extreme Weather Event: Flooding, Landslides

Geographic Feature:

resource focuses on specific type of geography

Arctic, Ocean/Coastal

Geographic Location:

resource focuses on specific location

United States

Climate Change and Human Health Literature Portal

Health Impact:

specification of health effect or disease related to climate change exposure

Health Outcome Unspecified

Intervention:

strategy to prepare for or reduce the impact of climate change on health

A focus of content

Mitigation/Adaptation:

mitigation or adaptation strategy is a focus of resource

Adaptation

Resource Type:

format or standard characteristic of resource

Policy/Opinion

Timescale:

time period studied

Time Scale Unspecified

Vulnerability/Impact Assessment:

resource focus on process of identifying, quantifying, and prioritizing vulnerabilities in a system

A focus of content